

D-797
Old James Island Schoolhouse
Taylor's Island
c. 1825
Private

Estimated to date to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the former James Island schoolhouse is the oldest school to remain standing in Dorchester County. Mature cut nails used in its internal framing, and early nineteenth century window moldings that frame six-over-six sash windows confirm the construction date. Originally built along the road that traversed James Island before its near complete erosion, the schoolhouse was moved to the farm of Travers Spicer during the mid to late nineteenth century as a new generation of larger, one-room schools was built to serve the white and black populations on the island. While on the Mulberry Grove farm, the small frame schoolhouse was used as a smokehouse, which is why the internal frame is coated with remnants of soot and the joists have meat hooks or nails. During the early 1950s, it was decided to relocate the historic structure to the grounds of the Grace P. E. Church in a plan to preserve the building and use it as an auxiliary structure to the complex maintained by the Grace Foundation of Taylor's Island.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-797

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Old James Island Schoolhouse
other Old Taylor's Island Schoolhouse

2. Location

street and number Hoopers Neck Road not for publication
city, town Taylor's Island vicinity
county Dorchester County

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owner)

name Grace Foundation, Inc.
street and number P. O. Box 119 telephone
city, town Taylor's Island state MD zip code 21669-0119

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber folio
city, town Cambridge tax map 58 tax parcel 53 tax ID number 059492

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

Inventory No. D-797

Condition

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The old James Island Schoolhouse, also known as the old Taylor's Island Schoolhouse, has been moved twice from its original site along the north/south road that traversed James Island. Initially relocated to the farm of Travers Spicer known as Mulberry Grove during the mid to late nineteenth century, the building was moved as second time to the property of the Grace Foundation during the mid twentieth century in an effort to preserve the structure. Architectural finish features and the pervasive use of mature cut nails in its internal framing, place its construction during the second quarter of the nineteenth century around 1820-40. Supported on a brick pier foundation, the exterior has been resheathed with mid twentieth century beaded weatherboards, and the gable-front roof is covered with wood shingles. The building currently faces north with the gable roof oriented on a north/south axis.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The former James Island Schoolhouse, dating to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, stands on the property of the Grace Foundation in company with the Grace P. E. Church and the Taylor's Island Chapel-of-Ease for Dorchester Parish. Supported on brick piers, the one-room plan, gable-front schoolhouse is sheathed with mid twentieth century beaded weatherboards, and the steeply pitched gable roof is covered with wood shingles. The interior has an exposed braced timber frame assembled with mature cut nails throughout. Evident inside is a layer of smoke and soot left from the time when it was used as a smokehouse after it had been moved to the farm of Travers Spicer during the mid to late nineteenth century.

The north gable-front elevation is pierced by a door opening fitted with a board-and-batten door opening that swings on wrought-iron strap hinges. The gable end of the building is finished flush with a plain bargeboard. The side elevations are pierced by single six-over-six sash window openings fitted with single leaf board shutters. The window opening is framed by an early nineteenth century beaded edge surround typical of the estimated period of construction. The base of the gable roof is finished with a boxed cornice that has been rebuilt with new surfaces. The south gable end is a plain weatherboarded wall surface. A small boarded up opening pierces the upper gable end.

The interior has an exposed braced timber frame assembled with mature cut nails where the posts meet the braces. Remnants of internal whitewash remain on some surfaces. Although partially reworked the six-over-six sash windows openings appear to be original to the building. The loft was inaccessible.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-797

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Estimated to date to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the former James Island Schoolhouse is the oldest school to remain standing in Dorchester County. Mature cut nails used in its internal braced framing, and early nineteenth century window moldings confirm the construction date. Originally built along the road that traversed James Island, the schoolhouse was moved to the farm of Travers Spicer during the mid to late nineteenth century as a new generation of larger, one-room schools was built to serve the white and black populations of the island. While on the Mulberry Grove farm, the small frame schoolhouse was used as a smokehouse, which is why the internal frame is coated with remnants of soot and the joists have meat hooks. During the early 1950s it was decided to relocate the historic structure to the grounds of the Grace P. E. Church in a plan to preserve the building as use it as an auxiliary structure to the complex maintained by the Grace Foundation of Taylor's Island.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. D-797

Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.
Interview with John S. "Pat" Neild, Grace Foundation, 11.10.10.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 113,256 square feet
Acreage of historical setting 1/2 acre
Quadrangle name Taylor's Island, MD

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Chesapeake Country Heritage & Preservation	date	11/18/2010
street & number	Cedar Hill, P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



D-797, Old James Island School
Taylor's Island Quandragnle



D-797

Old JAMES ISLAND SCITOO LITONSE
Taylor's Island, DORCHESTER C. up.
NORTHEAST ELEVATION

N. 2010, PAUL B. TOUANT, PITUITV.
NEZ. / MO. HISTORICAL TRAIL

1 of 3



D-797

Old James Island School

Taylor's Island, Dorchester Co. Md.
Northwest Elevation

11.2010, Paul B. Toward, Potomac.

W.F.G. / M.D. Historical Trust



D-997

Oca James Island School

Taylor's Island,

Dorchester Co., MD.

WEST ELEVATION -

SHUTTERED WINDOW

N.E./MD. Historical Trust